

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PATERNITY

- My child was born before December 31, 1996, and I didn't list the father on the birth certificate. Can I add the father's name now?
- My child was born after December 31, 1996, and I didn't list the father on the birth certificate. Can I add the father's name now?
- How do I obtain a Declaration of Paternity form?
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My child was born before December 31, 1996, and I didn't list the father on the birth certificate. Can I add the father's name now?

If your child was born before December 31, 1996, you can add the biological father's name by completing an *Application to Amend a Birth Record – Acknowledgement of Paternity* (VS 22). Once completed, forward the application to the Office of Vital Records (OVR), Attention: Amended Records, MS 5103, P.O. Box 997410, Sacramento, CA 95899-7410, along with the appropriate fee.

My child was born after December 31, 1996, and I didn't list the father on the birth certificate. Can I add the father's name now?

If your child was born after December 31, 1996, you can add the biological father's name by submitting a completed *Application to Amend a Birth Record – Acknowledgement of Paternity* (VS 22) to the Office of Vital Records (OVR), Attention: Amended Records, MS 5103, P.O. Box 997410, Sacramento, CA 95899-7410, along with the appropriate fee.

The VS 22 **MUST** be accompanied by a copy of your marriage certificate verifying your marriage to the child's biological father. If you are not legally married to your child's father, the federal Welfare Reform Act requires that a Declaration of Paternity be signed by both parents in the presence of a witness as specified below, before the father can be added to the birth certificate. A legible copy of this form must accompany the VS 22 *Acknowledgement of Paternity* application form. This law went into effect on January 1, 1997.

How do I obtain a Declaration of Paternity form?

The California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) administers the Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) in California. You can obtain a Declaration of Paternity form from the [DCSS](#) web site, all local child support agency offices, offices of local registrars of births and deaths, courts, and county welfare departments within this state.

Who may witness parents' signatures on a Declaration of Paternity?

Staff in local child support agency offices, offices of local registrars of births and deaths, courts, and county welfare departments are authorized to witness the signatures of parents and are responsible for forwarding the original signed Declaration of Paternity to the DCSS. If the Declaration of Paternity is not witnessed by staff in one of these agencies, parents' signatures must be witnessed by a Notary Public and the parents are responsible for forwarding the original signed Declaration of Paternity to DCSS (DCSS' toll free number is 866-249-0773). If you have any questions about the Declaration of Paternity form, please contact your local Family Support office or visit the [DCSS](#) web site.

### What is the fee to amend my child's birth certificate after acknowledgement of paternity?

There is a processing fee of \$20.00, which includes one certified copy. Additional certified copies are \$15.00 each. ***Note: Effective July 1, 2003, the law imposes new guidelines for obtaining certified copies of birth certificates. This law was passed to help protect against identity theft. If you want a certified copy of your child's birth certificate once it has been amended, you must complete the sworn statement included with the [Application for Certified Copy of Birth Record](#) and have it notarized. You do not have to complete the entire application, but please read the first page for a definition of "authorized person" before completing the sworn statement. Your notarized statement, sworn under penalty of perjury that you are an "authorized person," must accompany the VS 22 application form if we are to provide you a certified copy.***

### What information can I change or add with an Acknowledgement of Paternity form?

The Acknowledgement of Paternity form can be used to:

- Add the biological father's information ***if*** these items have not been completed on the original birth certificate.
- Change the child's last name to that of the biological father's last name.
- Add the biological father's last name to the last name already listed on the birth certificate.
- Add the child's first or middle name to the birth certificate when ***none*** previously exists. This form ***will not*** allow OVR to change the first or middle names already listed on the birth certificate.

### Once my child's birth certificate is amended after acknowledgement of paternity, what happens to the original birth certificate?

When an acceptable application is submitted to OVR, along with the appropriate forms and fee, OVR will seal your child's original birth certificate and replace the sealed record with a new birth certificate. Once it has been sealed, the original birth certificate is only available upon order of the court.

**Health & Safety Code Section 102755 provides:** *"Upon receipt of the application and payment of the required fee, and in the absence of conflicting information on the originally registered certificate of live birth, the State Registrar shall review the application for acceptance for filing, and if accepted shall establish a new birth certificate for the child in the manner prescribed in Article 1*

*(commencing with Section 102625), if the original record of birth is on file in the office of the State Registrar.”*

**Health & Safety Code Section 102760 provides:** *“All records and information specified in this article, other than the newly issued birth certificate, shall be available only upon order of a court of record.”*

### Where do I get a VS 22 form?

We are unable to provide this form online. However, you can request that a form be mailed to you by clicking on [OVRform@dhs.ca.gov](mailto:OVRform@dhs.ca.gov) and providing us with your name, mailing address, and the form number you wish to receive. You may also obtain the form from the [County Recorder](#) or the [County Health Department](#) located in any California county. Xeroxed copies of the form are not acceptable.

### How do I complete the VS 22 application form?

There are three parts to the VS 22. Items 1A-1C in **PART I** are to be completed **exactly** as they appear on your child’s original birth certificate. If you need a copy of your child’s original birth certificate to complete this section, you may obtain a copy by completing an [Application for Certified Copy of Birth Record](#) and submitting the application to OVR, along with the \$15.00 fee. ***(Note: Effective July 1, 2003, the law imposes new guidelines for obtaining certified copies of birth certificates. This law was passed to help protect against identity theft. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the application form.)*** The processing time for obtaining a certified copy from OVR is approximately 14 weeks; however, you may obtain a certified copy from the [County Recorder](#) in the county where your child was born in a much timelier manner.

**PART II** should be completed with the information you wish to appear on the new birth certificate.

**PART III:** The father needs to complete Items 15A through 15F, and the mother needs to complete Items 16A through 16F.

It is best to complete the VS 22 with a typewriter (except where signatures are required). If you do not have a typewriter, please complete the application in durable black ink and be sure to write legibly so OVR staff can easily read the information. Remember, this information will be used to prepare your child’s new birth certificate.

### What exactly do I need to mail into the Office of Vital Records to get my child's new birth certificate?

You will need to mail the following into the Office of Vital Records:

- Properly completed VS 22.
- If you are unmarried parents – a legible copy of the Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) form – the original is forwarded to the DCSS.
- If you are married parents – a copy of your marriage certificate.
- The appropriate fee.

### How long will it take to obtain my child's new birth certificate?

Due to a current backlog of pending amendments, all requests are processed in the order received. The current processing time is approximately ten months. Please note that processing times are subject to change without notice.

### I still have unanswered questions. Where can I get help?

If you have additional questions, please call (916) 557-6075 and leave your name and telephone number. One of our Amended Records Unit staff will return your call within 48 hours.